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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 005986

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KJUS](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: OAS DELEGATION INSPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN
SAN JOSE DE APARTADO

REF: A. BOGOTA 10898
[1](#)B. BOGOTA 3625
[1](#)C. BOGOTA 5672

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer. Reason: 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Poloff accompanied an international delegation organized by the OAS Mission to Aid the Peace Process (MAPP/OAS) to hear concerns of the San Jose de Apartado Peace Community (PC). PC members reiterated their distrust of the GOC justice system and concerns about security. Apartado municipal officials and GOC security forces voiced frustration with the PC's refusal to cooperate. The OAS delegation will try to promote dialogue between the PC, the GOC, and local officials, but recognizes this will be difficult given the deep distrust on all sides. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On August, 13-14 Poloff visited San Jose de Apartado on a fact-finding mission led by MAPP/OAS. The Embassies of Canada, Germany, Chile, Sweden and Switzerland also participated, as did the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Poloffs previously visited the region on August 1 (Bogota 5672).

Peace Community Wants Justice

[1](#)3. (C) Wilson David, a PC leader, reiterated the community's distrust of state entities and faulted the legal process for failing to prosecute those guilty of killing PC members. He said the military, guerrillas and paramilitaries had all targeted the community. The GOC is incapable of protecting La Holandita and the surrounding, self-designated humanitarian zones. David and other leaders raised their concerns about attacks by the illegal armed group, Aguilas Negras, which they said has ties to demobilized paramilitaries. In a separate meeting, local residents of San Jose de Apartado who were not part of the PC also voiced fears about the Aguilas Negras and other new criminal groups.

[1](#)4. (U) Father Javier Giraldo, a Jesuit with longstanding ties to the PC, said the PC is tired of being labeled as guerrilla sympathizers by the media and GOC. He complained that appeals to the Ministry of Defense, Fiscalía (Prosecutor General's Office), Antioquian governor and Apartado mayors for action were fruitless. Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) decisions demanding investigations and GOC protection of the PC had not resulted in concrete steps. He also accused security forces of coercive interrogations, blackmail, and bribery.

15. (U) Giraldo reiterated the PC,s previous demands, including a formal apology from President Uribe for allegedly slandering the PC, GOC recognition of humanitarian zones, and removal of a local police station from San Jose de Apartado. He called for the establishment of a commission with participation by the international community to evaluate the judicial process and violence against the community. This would be a crucial step in confidence-building with GOC state entities. He said the PC would not cooperate with a system where impunity was pervasive.

17th Brigade and Police Reinforce Human Rights

16. (U) Colonel Jorge Arturo Salgado Restrepo (Deputy Commander of the 17th brigade) reiterated the brigade,s zero tolerance policy on human rights violations. In 2006, 1195 soldiers were trained in human rights and another 2443 have been training in 2007. After four months of operations, soldiers receive a fifteen day holiday. They then receive additional human rights training before returning to duty in compliance with decree 327 of the Constitutional Court.

17. (U) Salgado noted the importance of confidence-building measures with the local community. The brigade has initiated social, health and education programs in San Jose de Apartado and surrounding areas, but the PC continues to refuse to participate. He said incoming General Jorge Ernesto Rodriguez Clavejo, who took his post two weeks ago, invited the PC to speak with him about their concerns but had so far not received a response. He said the brigade has no evidence the Aguilas Negras were operating in the area, but noted new criminal groups were a growing concern.

18. (U) Police officials said routine identification and vehicle checks were necessary in Apartado and the road leading to the PC to protect the community in accordance with IAHCR rulings. The region is a narco-trafficking corridor, and thirteen FARC have been captured in the area this year alone. Three police officers were killed in July by FARC snipers on the road between the PC and Apartado. Security remains a serious challenge, but the police now have 29 stations in 13 municipalities to protect Apartado and surrounding areas.

Mayor,s Office: Our Outreach is Rejected

19. (U) Adriana Feliz Gonzales, Secretary of Apartado Municipality, said the PC refuses to recognize local authorities. She understands the need to gain the PC's confidence, but said the municipality has implemented several new social, health and education programs. The security situation in Apartado has also improved sharply, but more needs to be done. Juan Carlos Munoz, the Secretary for Environment, Development and Displacement, called the PC a "resistance community" that has rebuffed all outreach by the mayor,s office. Working with Accion Social, the municipality offered to transport students daily from the PC to school but the offer was refused. Individual PC members receive municipal medical services, but the group as a whole has not approached local officials for services.

Next Steps

110. (U) The OAS delegation agreed to meet next week to discuss next steps. Rikard Nordgren, External Relations Director for MAPP/OAS, told poloff he will suggest the group serve as an intermediary to promote dialogue among the PC, security forces, and local authorities. Still, he recognized this would be difficult given the deep distrust that exists on all sides.
Nichols